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Draft of city's new comprehensive plan is complete

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After months of thoughtful consideration, public meetings, and consultations with a variety of stakeholder groups, the final draft of the city's new comprehensive plan is complete and will be presented to the planning board later this month for review.

The new comprehensive plan called, 21st Century Warwick: City of Livable Neighborhoods, will guide development for the next 20 years. It contains an overall vision that embodies Warwick's unique sense of place, culture and heritage, and establishes a set of goals, policies and actions to implement the vision. The plan's organized into a series of "elements," or topic areas, including: natural resources, historic and cultural resources, open space and recreation, housing and neighborhoods, economic development, transportation and circulation, services and facilities, land use, and "resilience," an element focusing on how best to adapt to increased hazards from flooding and other potential impacts of climate change.

Planning director William

DePasquale, Jr. notes that the plan "sets the framework for socially responsible, sustainable growth and development that improves the overall health, welfare and prosperity of our community."

After the plan is presented, the planning board will hold a public hearing prior to approving a final version. After that, it will be submitted to the city council for review and adoption. The final step in the process is adoption of the plan by the state division of planning.

A draft has been made available online for public review and comment prior to submission to the state planning board, and an open house earlier this month - the latest in a series of activities to encourage the public's input and involvement since plan development began about a year and a half ago - afforded the general public an opportunity to review the draft and ask questions about the approval process.

An advisory committee, which serves as a sounding board for the planning team, has been meeting regularly as well. A consultant team led by Goody Clancy and Associates of Boston has been working with the city on this process. Development of the plan is being paid for in part with funding from the Statewide Planning Program's Planning Challenge Grant Program.

For more information, please contact the planning department.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick and the chairman of the RIPTA board of directors.

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